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Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 USUN N 01144 092302Z

12
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W
---------- 062127
R 092218Z APR 75
FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9831
INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY LISBON

S E C R E T USUN 1144

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PO, PFOR, MARR, UR
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH FORMER PORTUGUESE MINISTER OF STATE PINTO

1. AT ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN'S REQUEST, AMBASSADOR BENNETT, ACCOMPANIED BY POLCOUNS, MET WITH FORMER PORTUGUESE MINISTER OF STATE PEDRO PINTO LATE APRIL 8 FOR LENGTHY CONVERSATION. PINTO, NOW IN EXILE IN BRAZIL, HAD SPENT A WEEK IN NEW YORK AND PLANNED DEPART EVENING APRIL 8 FOR SAO PAULO. REPRESENTING HIMSELF AS NON-FASCIST, MODERATE CONSERVATIVE, ANTI-COMMUNIST DEMOCRAT, PINTO MAINTAINED THAT IT IS DUTY OF PORTUGUESE EXILES TO OPPOSE MARCH OF COMMUNISM IN PORTUGAL RATHER THAN MERELY MERGE INTO BRAZILIAN SOCIETY. HE EXPRESSED VIEW PORTUGUESE COULD DO NOTHING UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES ON THEIR OWN. PINTO MAY HAVE BEEN MAKING DIGNIFIED OFFER OF HIS SERVICES TO WHAT HE ANTICIPATES WILL BE EVENTUAL FOREIGN-SUPPORTED EFFORT TO TOPPLE COSTA GOMES GOVERNMENT. HE STRESSED STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF FOUR PORTUGUESE-HELD ISLAND AREAS IN NORTH AND SOUTH ATLANTIC AND IMPLIED U.S. SHOULD TAKE DIRECT INTEREST IN THEIR FUTURE.

2. PINTO WAS CONSIDERABLY AGITATED, HAVING JUST LEARNED THAT PLANS TO GET HIS SIXTEEN YEAR OLD SON OUT OF PORTUGAL HAD FAILED, COMPROMISING HIS SON AND POSSIBLY GIVING COM-
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MUNIST REGIME A HOSTAGE TO PINTO'S OWN GOOD BEHAVIOR.

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GOVERNMENT HAD INTERCEPTED PINTO'S LETTER CARRIED BY
PRESUMED SAFE HAND COURIER. LETTER CONTAINED MONEY AND
INSTRUCTIONS FOR FLIGHT INTO SPAIN FROM SON PEDRO'S BOARDING
SCHOOL AT ABRANTES. PINTO'S DAUGHTER RESIDES IN LONDON.

3. COMMENTING ON PERSONALITIES, PINTO CLAIMED KNOWLEDGE
THAT COSTA GOMES HAS BEEN MEMBER COMMUNIST PARTY SINCE
1956. HE DISMISSED PRIME MINISTER GONCALVES AS OUT AND
OUT COMMUNIST. PINTO MENTIONED HIS FORMER CHEF DE
CABINET, A PARAPLEGIC EX-MAJOR NAMED VILLA-LOBOS, AS A VERY
CONSERVATIVE INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS THUS FAR SURVIVED IN OFFICE
AND WHO COULD BE USEFUL TO ANTI-COMMUNISTS EVENTUALLY.
PINTO, A FORMER CONSUL GENERAL IN NEW YORK, PARIS AND
JOHANNESBURG EMPHASIZED HIS OWN BROAD CONTACTS AMONG EMIGRE
PORTUGUESE IN FRANCE, U.S., SOUTH AFRICA AND BRAZIL.

4. HE ADMIRES AMBASSADOR VEIGA-SIMAO FOR HIS WORK IN
EDUCATION AND CONSIDERS HIM TO BE A POSSIBLE RALLYING POINT
FOR MODERATE FORCES IN FUTURE. IN THAT CONNECTION, HE THOUGHT
VEIGA-SIMAO WOULD BE VERY ILL-ADVISED TO RETURN TO PORTUGAL
NOW WHERE, EVEN IF HE WERE TO KEEP HIS FREEDOM, HIS GOOD
NAME LIKELY TO BE COMPROMISED AND HIS REPUTATION
TARNISHED THROUGH TACTICS OF EXTREME LEFT. USUN WOULD
WELCOME VIEWS OF AMBASSADOR CARLUCCI RE POSSIBILITY OF
PERSONAL RISKS INVOLVED FOR VEIGA-SIMAO IN EVENT HE
TRAVELS TO LISBON.

5. PINTO EXPRESSED BELIEF GOP NOW ENGAGED IN ESTAB-
LISHING CPP CONTROL OVER OVERSEAS ISLAND TERRITORIES. HE
REGARDED "ALL FOUR" AS OF IMPORTANT STRATEGIC VALUE AND
REFERRED TO THEM AS "FOUR FLEETS IN BEING". HE SEEMED TO
CONSIDER CAPE VERDE ISLANDS, WITH VALUE TO USSR IN HIS VIEW
COMPARABLE TO VALUE OF AZORES TO U.S. AND NATO, AS MOST IMPORTANT
PRIZE OF ALL. RE AFRICA, PINTO HAS WRITTEN OFF FRELIMO AND
PAIGC TO MARXISTS, BUT ARGUES THAT ANGOLA STILL HAS A CHANCE TO
BECOME DEMOCRATIC. HE MUSED ON ANOMALY THAT HE HAS COME TO
POINT OF REGARDING MOBUTU AS POSSIBLE SAVIOR OF ANGOLA.

6. TO SUPPORT HIMSELF, PINTO HOPES TO BEGIN A NEW
CAREER IN EXPORT AND IMPORT OF BANANAS AND OTHER FRUITS.
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LIKE OTHER PROMINENT EMIGRES, HE HAS BEEN OFFERED ECONOMIC
SUPPORT AND COOPERATION OF PROSPEROUS PORTUGUESE LONG
ESTABLISHED IN BRAZIL. HE GAVE APPEARANCE OF SINCERITY,
HOWEVER, IN NOT WANTING TO ABANDON CAUSE OF PORTUGUESE FREEDOM.
BENNETT WISHED HIM WELL AND PROMISED TO INFORM U.S. EMBASSY
LISBON OF PLIGHT OF HIS SON. PINTO SAID HE WOULD BE VISITING
BRASILIA SOON AND BENNETT SUGGESTED FSO GIRDLER AS SUITABLE
CONTACT THERE.

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